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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW**

**Brian Lehrer:** It's the Brian Lehrer Show on WNYC. Good morning everyone and we begin today as usual on Fridays with our weekly Ask the Mayor segment, my questions and yours for Mayor Bill de Blasio. Our phones are open at 212-433-WNYC, 433-9692 or tweet a question, we will watch our Twitter feed, just use the hashtag, #AskTheMayor. Good morning Mr. Mayor, welcome back to WNYC.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, Brian.

**Lehrer:** Well it's our last Friday before the primary and your wife has endorsed in the Attorney General's race, Zephyr Teachout but you haven't endorsed for AG or Governor. Do you have something for us?

**Mayor:** Well let me give you my scorecard right now and what I'm thinking at the moment. First of all in the State Senate I've endorsed two of the anti-IDC challengers, Jessica Ramos is Queens and Zellnor Myrie in Brooklyn and think they are both really doing great at winning back those seats for real Democrats and to have a real Democratic majority in Albany which the city and state need. On Attorney General, yes my wife Chirlane endorsed Zephyr Teachout. I'll be making a decision in the next 48 hours or so. I looked at it, I watched the coverage with interest from your debate that you hosted last night and I want to thank you for doing that.

**Lehrer:** Thank you.

**Mayor:** I have to say, one thing really struck me – I have known Sean Maloney for two decades and I like and respect him. I did not know about his voting record. I know he comes from a conservative district but I saw some real philosophical differences that concerned me particularly, his vote to water down the Dodd-Frank Bill. I'm very, very concerned about the situation on Wall Street. I don't think it's impossible that we would have another recession based on the activities of the financial industry. I think the financial industry needs more regulation, not less. So that's surprised me and I think at this point in the Democratic party we are really trying to decide who we are and I'm from the progressive wing of this party that wants tough regulation of Wall Street and wants an approach to government that focuses on the needs of working people

and challenges corporations. So that causes me a concern about Sean. I respect him but that was an eye opener for me. But I'll make that final decision in terms of all of those candidates in the next 48 hours or so.

And then the same on Governor and Lieutenant Governor, I've said I want to make a final decision by the end of the weekend and let people know what it is and why it is and obviously considering a whole range of factors as I do that.

**Lehrer:** You saw on Governor and Lieutenant Governor that the Times now has endorsed Jumaane Williams in the Lieutenant Governor primary, they had previously endorsed Governor Cuomo is the gubernatorial so that's a split ticket endorsement. People can do that for Governor and Lieutenant Governor in this primary. They endorsed for Cuomo for reelection but not his current Lieutenant Governor, Kathy Hochul, any reaction to that?

**Mayor:** Well it's something that we've seen previously in history. It's an interesting take because you know there are two different versions of what the Lieutenant Governor's Office could be. There is the Lieutenant Governor you know sort of ceremonial office waiting in the wings. And then there is a vision which we have seen in this state in the past and we've certainly seen in other states of a more consequential Lieutenant Governor who has their own portfolio and their own views and serves as something of a check and balance. So I was very interested in the position the Times took and I think a lot of people are going to pay attention to it because the central question is how are we going to change Albany? The one thing that I think has come out in this election year and it's been a very good debate this year but if you had to boil it down, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, one theme is coming through profoundly. Albany as a whole is not effective enough, is too riven by corruption, does not represent modern progressive government. How are we going to fix that? How are we going to create an entirely new approach worthy of the people of this state? And I think it's been a healthy dialogue but certainly one of the options people may look at is having a governor and lieutenant Governor that have different perspectives and that creates greater pressure for change.

**Lehrer:** I won't take that as quiet an endorsement but it maybe gives us a clue –

**Mayor:** Again, I'll come out with my formal view as I said in the next 48 hours, governor, lieutenant governor, and AG. But you know I can be an observer and I can tell people while I'm thinking about the endorsing question some of the things I'm seeing. What I am seeing is an energy for change that I think is unprecedented in this state.

**Lehrer:** On your critique of Congressman Maloney, couldn't one say that there are some compromises that many New York Democrats who are progressives, make when they are in swing districts – Zephyr Teachout also got fire in this debate and last week's debate as you know for having taken a not unambiguous position, a more ambiguous position on the SAFE Act, the gun control law when she was running for congress upstate. And look at Senator Gillibrand who had made some compromises along those lines when she represented an upstate district and look at the unabashed progressive she's turned into now that she's elected statewide. So how much do you really want to kill Congressman Maloney for that?

**Mayor:** Oh, no first of all I know him, I like him, I respect him. It's not about killing quote on quote, anyone. It is about having an honest discussion about what we want in our next attorney general and I do think the next Attorney General of New York has to be the Sheriff of Wall Street, this has been an issue in this campaign. Let me say it very squarely as someone who represents the City of New York and the folks who work on wall Street, Wall Street needs a sheriff and Wall Street needs tough regulation and if it doesn't have it we will have another crash. If we don't have a tough regulatory approach to Wall Street, Wall Street will drive us into the ground. We've seen it, we saw it in 1929, we saw it a decade ago, we will see it again. So this is my central concern, I need to know that the next attorney general will really be tough on Wall Street. And by the way who has been successfully prosecuted who brought on the Great Recession and the crash a decade ago? Almost no one. So I think we have to know that the next attorney general will be absolutely committed to that and we have to look at all of their records, absolutely, consistencies and inconsistencies. But I'm saying this one stood out to me because reducing regulation on Wall Street, particularly in the age of Donald Trump, I think is dangerous.

**Lehrer:** And on endorsing a couple of the opponents of the IDC, the breakaway Democratic faction that helped keep the Republicans in power in the State Senate, there are eight of them and you've endorsed the challengers of two, why not just run the table on that and say IDC reelection? No.

**Mayor:** Every situation is different and there are some cases where I know the candidates well and others where I don't. You know I have to look at this case by case. I mean this is a blunt reality of not just being a person with my own personal views but also being the steward of this city and having to think about governance of this city and how we continue our work in Albany next year and in Albany everything is up for grabs Brian. Rent regulation and I want to say to all of your listeners, we have the ultimate chance next year to strengthen rent regulation and save affordable housing in this city, every vote for State Senate and all of these other offices is going to be crucial to that. We have mayoral control of education up which will determine whether we can continue to make change in our school system. We have how we are going to fund the MTA and I believe in the millionaires' tax and my hope is that with a Democratic senate we can finally get a millionaires' tax and fund the MTA for the long haul. These are huge issues so I have to balance my political views and what I think is important in terms of the interests of the City. But in the two cases where I have endorsed so far, Jessica Ramos and Zellnor Myrie, I have no doubt that they are serious committed progressives who will be part of the Democratic Party and will not work with the republicans in Albany.

**Lehrer:** What about the one particular case of incumbent Marisol Alcantara from Manhattan's West Side who's going to be on the show later this morning in addition to her challenger Robert Jackson, I read that you or your political action committee has given Jackson money and yet you are not making a verbal endorsement, explain that.

**Mayor:** Yes, no that's a fair question and I'm still waiting to have a further conversation with Robert before deciding that. Robert and I were colleagues in the City Council. I think he has been an extraordinary leader on the topic of education, obviously he was one of the lead plaintiffs in the case that was brought to get New York City fair funding for our schools by the State of New York – a case that he and his colleagues but we still have not received billions of

dollars that we are owed in education funding that would be transcendent for our school system. So I think the world of Robert. Marisol is someone that I have a long and positive relationship as well. I disagree with her choice to join the IDC and to collaborate with the State Senate Republicans but I will make a final decision on that once I talk to Robert.

**Lehrer:** Meghan in Park Slope you are on WNYC with Mayor de Blasio, hello Meghan.

**Question:** Hi, good morning Brian and good morning Mayor de Blasio. Quick comment and then quick question – we are so eager here in District 15 Mr. Mayor for your announcement about the recommendations on integration and inclusion in our schools and you know we can be patient for another week or two. People in this cog are quiet used to the need for patience but we want you to understand, we hope that you understand, how singular of a moment this is and we really urge you to time the implementation of any of these recommendations that you do accept in full accordance with the urgency of this moment. And my question is that Chancellor Carranza has been really quiet explicit about his intention to support these recommendations as well in his critiques of the idea of using screening that perpetuates segregation in our public schools and I wondered if you would echo his support?

**Mayor:** Meghan, thank you so much for the question, a couple of things – first of all on the timing, our position on how to best approach the District 15 proposal will be locked down this month for sure in plenty of time for any implementation for the next round of admissions. Second, District 15 obviously is my home district, I was a school board member here, I was also on something we called the diversity committee on P.S. 372 where my children Chiara and Dante went to elementary school and we are trying to find ways to bring in students from a wider range of backgrounds across District 15 which includes Red Hook, which includes Sunset Park, and to start breaking down some of the divisions. We didn't have the tools we needed and bluntly at that time we did not have the support of the Department of Education. What Richard Carranza is doing, I 100 percent support and in fact I hired him in large measure because he say education as a path way to social justice and we now believe we have tools that are really changing our approach and allowing us to do a much better job at diversifying our schools. So there's been an evolution and a good one in the last few years of our approach in figuring out something that would actually work. I have always us been resident to put forward a vision without a way to get there.

I now increasingly believe we have real tangible ways to get there and that also speaks to the screened school issue. More and more even before Chancellor Carranza, we were examining the question of the screening schools, we were obviously examining the question of specialized schools. We have a tangible specialized schools proposal which is going to go to Albany to finally bring real diversity to the specialized schools. We are also in the process of coming up with a series of changes around the screened schools to make sure that they continue to be great schools with a more diverse student body and breaking down some of the mistakes previously in the admissions process that I think were inadvertently in many cases exclusionary. So yes, all of that is proceeding and there's real momentum. The difference honestly today versus two or three years ago is we have found solutions we didn't know about then, we didn't know would work but now we see working particular from the ground up with real local support. And we are going to build on those rapidly.

**Lehrer:** On the timing of the approval if it's going to be approval of the District 15 plan, the Chancellor was here on Tuesday and he said look for it in the next 48 hours. Now it's been three days and you're saying sometime this month. Did something happen to delay that announcement?

**Mayor:** The Chancellor, I think the world of him, we are absolutely philosophically aligned. I think in his eagerness for change he said a timeline that was a little quicker than could actually be achieved. But I have talked to him about it directly, definitely this month.

**Lehrer:** Craig in Manhattan you are on WNYC with the Mayor, hello Craig.

**Question:** Hi Mr. Mayor, hi Brian. I'm calling about the proposed plan to relocate the carriage horses to the Central Park. And let me just assure you I will skip the history, back and forth that has sadly characterized this discussion for so many years.

**Mayor;** Craig, Craig you are a great New Yorker for that.

[Laughter]

**Question:** Thank you, well we have all heard it and it doesn't get us anywhere. And I just want ask about a couple of facts because as I understand it there's a whole movement of the lines into the park to supposedly to protect the welfare of the horses. And we all want to do that, everybody wants to make sure that our horses are protected and safe. So my question really is what studies, has the City conducted any studies about the safety? Has the city conducted any studies about the shade? And the reason I ask is that the group, the supporting group I'm with, not part of the industry – we've done some preliminary studies and what we found is that three out of the four new zones actually have less shade than the current zones. And especially the zone right across from Tavern on the Green which is basically in the sun all day long.

**Lehrer:** Even though it's in the park is what you are saying.

**Question:** Right even though it's in the park, that zone is in the sun all day long, the other two zones have more shade. We also found, we did some temperatures readings the other day. For four hours we went around Central Park and took temperatures. At each of the four zones in the park, the temperature was five to ten degrees higher than what we measure on Central Park South.

**Lehrer:** And Craig, I'm going to stop you there and get answers but your points are clear and on the table. Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor:** Yes and Craig thank you for informed and really fair questions. One, let's start at the beginning of why we got this decision. Having the horses directly exposed, all day long to traffic on Central Park South makes no sense. This is what I've felt for years and years, makes no sense. Horses are not supposed to have cabs whizzing by and cars whizzing by all day long. It's not safe, there's been too many incidents, plus Central Park South is a really important artery we

could use that space for better things and we will use it for Vision Zero improvements, for pedestrian safety, tons of pedestrians in that area, we want them to be safer. We are going to use it to make bus travel better because opening up a lane will do that. And we want better faster, more efficient bus travel that's going to help New Yorkers get away from their cars and get away from for hire vehicles and get onto mass transit.

So that's one of the animating points here but second you know, we looked at these other alternative areas and we think they make sense. They are all in and around the park, they are readily accessible to the tourists. In terms of questions like shade and temperatures, those are real questions and the Department of Health has a mandate that if the temperatures go above a certain level, the horses are sent home. And I believe they did that at least once in the last week. Any time that that level is hit and we will keep our Department of Health inspectors out there, the horses cannot do business they are sent back to the stables. In terms of the shade question, we will look at that. I do want to say in principle we are going to see as I think is the case most of the time, these carriages are pretty busy, so they are not just going to be sitting in their waiting areas, they are going to be moving around. The routes have not changed, the routes that exist in the park, outside the park, will continue but from everything I have seen in this industry, the horses are moving and in use the majority of the time. So I take your points to heart, it's our obligations through the Department of Health to keep an eye on those areas to address the temperature issue and if we find that anything needs further enforcement we will address it as it comes up for sure.

**Lehrer:** Craig, thank you for your call. I wanted to ask you about another on the streets oriented thing that you – I guess you've gotten personally involved in, the uptown, crosstown, bike lane on Dyckman Street, which connects the Harlem River bike lane that goes north south and the Hudson River bike lane that goes north south when you get to the top Manhattan., that's Dyckman Street. And there is a relatively new bike lane going across there for safety, for the cyclists. Businesses, as you know, are complaining that it was hurting their businesses because cars couldn't park and then there was double parking. And the Transportation Department announced they were going take out the bike lanes, or part of them, and do them differently. And then you got involved and said, no, no, we are not taking out those bike lanes –

**Mayor:** No, I said something a little different. Let's get clear.

**Lehrer:** Okay, please -

**Mayor:** And I appreciate the question. First of all Vision Zero obviously is extremely important to me, this administration, this city, and this is part of Vision Zero, having bike lanes in general, having protected bike lanes where appropriate. I have also said, and again, I am – I liked what Craig said before on the horse issue about sometimes people having really to focus on the facts and bringing down the rhetoric a little.

There are times DOT puts in a bike lane and it actually needs some modifications. There's an unintended consequence or there's a design flaw or something doesn't work in practice, so I don't believe it's the case that every time we do something it is perfect, it's written in stone, and we can never change it. What I said in this case, I understand fully why people would say, well if

you put in a protected bike lane now, some of it is going to take it out, isn't that a step back? I share that concern and I said this issue was not brought to my desk and should have been.

It's a big city, it's a big government, this one rises to the level where I'm going to make a decision on it, and therefore I have instructed that it be frozen until I can hear all the facts and then I'll make decision and I'll explain it to people. So this was a procedural mistake, I believe fundamentally by the agency, with deepest respect to them. But if it's a case where I don't think it's going to help achieve Vision Zero, I will leave it the way it is. If it's a case where I think there's a valid change needed for the overall performance of that bike lane, I will do it and I'll explain it. So we'll soon have a resolution on that.

**Lehrer:** And last week we asked if you had read the critical New York Times feature on the NYPD Collision Investigation Squad and pedestrian cyclist safety with respect to Vision Zero, have you gotten a chance to read it yet? Any reaction?

**Mayor:** Cannot tell a lie, have not read it, but I have discussed the content of it with Commissioner O'Neill, and the bottom-line is this, there is a strong evolutionary reality around Vision Zero. It is growing literally every year. So the NYPD is now doing enforcement on Vision Zero beyond anybody's wildest dreams from the past. The massive amount of resources going into fighting speeding and failure to yield and stopping the problem before it begins. And that's actually, Brian, my argument that the first concern should be stopping these crashes from happening both by street design and enforcement by the NYPD and of course speed cameras and other measures.

Second, on the investigations, more energy, more personnel is being put into the investigation of crashes than ever before and we intend to deepen that. Vision Zero keeps growing, the efforts of the PD keeps growing. So what I said to the Commissioner, he was 100 percent accorded. Whatever he needs to deepen his investigations of those crashes, we want to make sure he has it, and he intends to keep building those efforts up and I think what you're seeing is more and more effective approach, and thank God there's more penalties now that go with it. For example, what the City Council passed, to provide real tangible penalties when people fail to yield and that lead to a horrible tragedy, we didn't have those in the past; we have them now. So there's not only more investigations but more consequences to those investigations.

**Lehrer:** Carlos in The Bronx, you're on WNYC with the Mayor. Hi Carlos.

**Question:** Yes, good morning Brian, good morning Mr. Mayor. I have two questions for the Mayor, one is [inaudible]

**Lehrer:** Are you there?

**Mayor:** Hello?

**Lehrer:** Carlos can you try to stabilize your cellphone connection, stand in one place or something give it a shot? Ok, we're going to try Carlos on a better line because I think he has an

important question and we'll go on next to Joanna in Jackson Heights. Joanna you're on WNYC with the Mayor.

**Question:** Thank you Mayor and thank you Brian for taking my call. I'm calling because I live in Jackson Heights in District 30 and across District 30, the first few days of school, we've been having a lot of problems with the new bus company that got the contracts to run the bus routes, in that they just haven't been showing up either in the morning to pick the kids up or in the afternoon at the schools to take the kids home. Where usually the first few days of school there are a few hiccups, but this is multiple schools, multiple bus routes, the company is just nowhere to be found. To the best of my knowledge the company has also not been responding when OPT Customer Service representatives call them or when the schools call them, so the schools don't know where the buses are either, so I am a little nervous. And so my question is – is there an incentive for the bus companies to actually show up. One driver told – one driver who did show up for a couple of stops this morning but not the whole route told the parents that he had just been hired yesterday temporarily for 10 days, which doesn't give you a lot of confidence when your kid's getting on the bus.

**Lehrer:** Alright, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** I appreciate the question very much. My kids rode the school bus, for part of their time in school and I can relate to this very personally. First of all please give your information to WNYC so we can follow up with you directly. Absolutely there are consequences for lack of performance by a company, we can ultimately suspend their contract and turn to a different company if they're not providing the service. You're right that the beginning of the year there are often challenges, some of that is part of such an extensive, complex system but it's still not forgivable if a company systematically isn't doing its job. So, yeah, there's a real incentive to show up, they signed a contract. If they're in breach of contract we will take our business elsewhere. I will find out with my team how we can fix this problem with District 30 immediately and obviously part of why I've supported the bus drivers in their efforts to get decent wages and benefits over the years, and you know they were horribly underpaid for a long time is that I want to see a very professional force when it comes to our bus drivers who take care of our kids. I want it to be a job that someone can have and keep for the long haul and be very good at. I really worry about any situation where that profession gets dumped down by low wages, and low benefits or companies that are not taking their responsibility seriously. So we're going to look into this company immediately. But I think the positive situation is overall what we have achieved in the last few is we did increase the wages and benefits for those bus drivers and we did create a more professional bus driving group that's serving our kids and that's what we want to see [inaudible] we want to professionalize it further as we go forward.

**Lehrer:** Renee in Manhattan, you're on WNYC. Hello, Renee, you're on with the Mayor. Renee, you're on right now.

**Question:** Oh, good morning, good morning. I am so sorry.

**Lehrer:** Go ahead.



**Question:** My name is Renee, I am from New York. I am a New Yorker, born in Kings County hospital. My only way to have a vacation – because I have three jobs now is to go to Governors Island. And I recently heard that Governors Island is scheduled to have hotels, or a hotel build there. And I want to know why? We have enough hotels in the city. Why not to keep [inaudible] [inaudible] for New Yorkers, and I just want to understand what is going on. To the subject, by the end of the month I will be much more versed just like the gentleman that called. But I am really upset. We have enough hotels.

**Lehrer:** Renee, I will say that we have – we also have another caller who we're not going to get to. Renee will speak for both of them on this rezoning of Governors Island. We had a few hanging over last week for you that we didn't get to. So this is obviously a thing out there.

**Mayor:** Sure. Renee you – first of all I appreciate you for being versed and looking to being even more well versed, and Brian I am always impressed by your listeners and how much they know about the issues, and care about the issues. This is straight forward to me. I went to Governors Island a month or so ago to tour it extensively. To really get a sense of the long term vision that members of my administration were working on. I believe it is a very sound vision, I'll you why. All of the parkland on Governors Island which is fantastic, and I urge any New Yorkers not been out there to take one of the ferries and go over there. It's all preserved for the long haul. That is a legally binding reality. None of the parkland will be disturbed. The historic buildings will be preserved. That was part of the agreement that when the city took it from federal government. But even more so, absolutely what we believe as a city and as an administration there have always been a couple of parcels of land on Governors Island that were not parkland that were utilized for mechanical and other purposes by the Coast Guard. They are not park, they were not planned to be park and the goal is to have a limited amount of development that will provide the operating funds to keep Governors Island the great place it is for all New Yorkers. It will permanently be, primarily parkland in an historic area. It will – this will give us the revenue stream to preserve it. In fact, a lot of those historic building needs preservation work. It is obviously surrounded by water, there's a lot of infrastructure that needs to be done to keep it up. In the end, people have to see the evolution that's happened in the public sector. I've talked about this a lot – it used to be, we thought, okay, well we can build a new park and it'll take care of itself. That's not how it happens. You build a new park and there's massive expenses and they grow over time, and budgets are tight. And if you could have funding stream that actually pays for it and protects it for the long-term for the public, that, to me, is sound government. So, this is what we're achieving here, and that's the only goal, to make sure that there's that funding stream. The good news is, the things that we're talking about, for example, academic stabilities, a conference center, which I think would be very, very good for this city as a place that attracts people from around the world. There's a lot of opportunities here that I think are very complimentary to our overall needs of the city, but also to keep everything good about that island in place.

**Lehrer:** From Governor's Island to Rikers Island, Politico reports that your Corrections Department has reversed course on a once-touted effort to house younger detainees, ages 19-to-21, separately from older adults three years after a rule was passed requiring the separation. What's that about?

**Mayor:** We believe still in the concept and we're looking to achieve it. Again, this is the key word, adult. We're talking about younger adults, ages 18-to-21, versus adults 22 and older. We do believe that the ideal is to have separation, but it has to be done in a way that improves safety and doesn't undermine safety. And when the first efforts were made, we found it was not working as planned. I mean, I say this vehemently as a progressive and someone who believes we can create a better world. Our plan sometimes have very good intentions, but we have to be open to understanding the unintended consequences. So, there were unintended consequences here and we saw, particularly because of gang affiliations some situations where it appeared to be making the situation less secure and making people less safe. So, we're re-working it. We're temporarily allowing the different age groups together, because we think it can allow us to secure the situation better for the near-term. But then the goal, as we are moving into new spaces soon, is to return to that notion of having the age groups separated. Again, none of this refers to juveniles, that's a whole new reality and, obviously, the whole plan we're working on now will never have juveniles co-mingled with adults.

**Lehrer:** And I'm reading that a police detective assigned to our security detail has sued the City, saying he faces discrimination because he's black. [Inaudible] says he was a bodyguard for your children until last year, when he began directly serving you, including sometimes driving your vehicle. He said a new supervisor reassigned him to invisible and superfluous jobs. Any thoughts about [inaudible] or his lawsuit?

**Mayor:** Look, I'm not going to get into the details of anything where there's a lawsuit. I have a lot of faith in the way the NYPD provides protection for me and my family, I think it's a very professional unit, it's a very diverse unit. I believe in the leadership in that unit. I have never seen anything, even slightly approximating discrimination in any way, shape, or form. So, even though I will not get into the details of the lawsuit, I can say I have never seen anything like that, and I'll leave it at that.

**Lehrer:** And we will leave it there for this week, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, as always. Next Friday will be the morning after primary night – primary day – Thursday. Yes – Thursday, not Tuesday, for the New York primary. So, we'll talk about primary results next week, and other things too.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Brian.

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